

Glitch

by Blade Starshot

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Summary: I've been waging a war for two years. But not on the front you expect. I'm waging a war for survival. All of this was caused by one simple video game. I was fighting by myself for all that time, then she appeared. (Dead story, sorry)

1. Chapter 1

Glitch

Chapter One: The Best There is...

Blade's POV

My name is Diamondblade385 or Blade for short. I had a real name, but I don't feel right using it. I lived in a small town in Michigan called Manchester. I had a pretty normal life; well as normal as you can get with a special needs sister. That all changed on April 4th, 2010. It was your normal Saturday. My dad took the girls out, my mom was at the local coffee shop and my brother was at a friend's house leaving me all alone at home. I was kicking back and relaxing blowing grunts up in Firefight mode in Halo Reach. Three gamers decided gamers joined my game, two on my team and one on the Covenant.

The guy with the Covenant called himself WitchDoctor101, and he was good. It wasn't long before my team ran out of lives, leaving me the last man standing. I decided to take advantage of the infinite ammo I had given my team and go on a sword spree. Witch took it as a challenge and attacked me. I blocked each blow until I only had a small amount of health left. I noticed a grunt that went Kamikaze and charging towards us, so I activated the Armor Lock I had and the grunt blew up his ally as well as himself. After that, I gained the upper hand, and pretty soon the game ended with Witch only having one life left, even with the kills he made out of my teammates. But something was off. My screen was still showing Corvette, the firefight map I was playing on.

I heard Witch's voice telling me that the game wasn't over until one of us had no lives left. I said "Bring it on, I can do this day." But I started to feel a strange sensation spreading through my body. I realized that my Spartan was also acting strangely, as if it was mimicking me. When I moved to get a charger cable, I saw my Spartan moving on its own. That's when it dawned to me that whatever I moved, so did my Spartan. Now I'm not one for swearing on occasion, but even that got me to say "What the hell?" I felt something attach to my hand and wrist area and I saw an armored gauntlet, like the one my Spartan was wearing. Pretty soon, other armor bits began appearing all over me until I was fully armored. Next thing I knew, I was on Corvette. After a few moments in Halo Reach, WitchDoctor appeared in front of me.

"You ready to rumble?" he asked me. "Can you give me a explanation of what's going on first?" WitchDoctor chuckled. "Simple, I want to make sure that I'm the best there is, so I have to kill you to keep that status."

After hearing that, I began to worry. He lunged at me with an energy sword and I jumped to the side instinctively. I noticed I still had the weapons I used in firefight mode, so I grabbed my DMR and started shooting. He simply blocked each shot I made with his sword like a Jedi with a lightsabre, and charged strait towards me. This time, I grabbed my own energy sword and blocked his attack. I silently thanked myself for taking fencing lessons cause they really help out here. I kept parrying each blow as well as counter-striking. After about five minutes of this, I finally somehow managed to get my sword into his stomach, and he started to die like a wounded soldier. I thought it was over, but then

WitchDoctor started laughing. I knew that was not good. "What's so funny?" I asked. "My mission was to kill all Spartans, by any means necessary, and I was stalling you long enough for that to go off."

He pointed upwards and then his character died. I looked up and saw the one thing worse than a nuclear bomb. A anti-matter bomb. Quickly, I began to list off my options. I could do nothing and die, so not that idea. I could try to diffuse the bomb, but possibly fail and die, so that left me with one option. Get off the ship. I looked around but saw only alien ships that I didn't have time to take a crash course in flying. Then I thought of an idea that didn't really appeal to me, jump off. I knew the odds of me surviving was high, I mean Six and Chief did it right? But I didn't want to do it. Soon the urge to survive overcame common sense and I jumped off the ship. Ten seconds later, the bomb went off, engulfing the entire ship.

A few hours later, I woke up in a mountainous area. I looked around for a few minutes before spotting my sword. I picked it up, and it never left me since. Right now I'm keeping an eye on WitchDoctor, watching his every move, his every game. I was acting like a protector, trying to prevent other players from sharing my fate. I glanced at l current game and noticed something that worried me. He was losing.

Allison's POV

I was playing an infection match on Powerhouse with some guy called WitchDoctor101. He was good, but I was better. Instead of hunting

zombies, I took an easy to defend area and shot any zombies that saw me. The match ended with me surviving and him a zombie. He sounded pissed off that I didn't die. But that's why my gamer tag is Freelancer_Tex923. I'm about as tough as her in this game. He wanted a rematch, but I had things to do. Like homework.

"That wasn't a suggestion." I jumped at the comment, because I thought I logged off of Live. Then I started to feel something, like I was being pumped with energy. Then bits of armor started appearing all over my regular clothes. "What the hell are you doing to me?!" I yelled at WitchDoctor, who I assumed was behind this. "Getting my rematch." Next thing I knew, I was standing in some house. It seemed very familiar, so I walked around in my new outfit. When I walked outside, I saw WitchDoctor standing right in front of me, with a whole lot of zombies.

"I don't think I'm in Kansas anymore." I joked. I joke in a serious situation to calm down. "Hahaha, welcome to Reach, prepare to die." He lunged at me and I cringed, waiting for the pain to come. It never did. I opened my eyes and saw blue Spartan with sniper helmet had blocked the attack. "WitchDoctor, it's been a while." the mysterious Spartan said to WitchDoctor. "Diamondblade385, you're supposed to be dead."

"I can be stubborn about that. Oh and one other thing,"

"What?"

"This." The Spartan pulled out a magnum with his free hand and shot WitchDoctor in the head then shot several other zombies in a similar fashion. The other zombies got their wits (if they even have wits) and charged at the man only to be cut down by his sword or shot in the head. Pretty soon, only my mysterious savior and I were left standing.

"What just happened?" I asked. "The same thing that happens every time WitchDoctor loses to a player. He pulls them into the game. By the way, my gamer tag is Diamondblade385, but you can call me Blade." Blade quickly looked around, obviously looking for something. "We need to leave, now." he said quietly to me. We headed to where a bridge was and saw a Pelican on the other side of the gap. "How are we going to-" Before I could finish, Blade grabbed me and threw me to the other side of the gap before taking a few steps back and leaping over it himself. "A little warning next time?" I said to Blade, who ignored me and boarded the ship. I decided that it was best to stay by him since he seems to know what's going on. "So, my name is Alison, but my gamer tag is Freelancer Tex. What's your real name?" Blade stayed silent as he started the Pelican and soon, we were off to who knows where.

End Transmission

From the author:

I apologize if I stole your gamer tag for my story. Message me if I did.

Chapter Two: Balance

Blade's POV

What a day. Saved a real life, exposed my existence to my arch nemesis and now I'm escorting a total stranger to what I call home. Morcia, a map I created solely for melee. But it was a number of maps squeezed into one map. We were heading towards the part I designed for an invasion match. It had a small structure where defenders defended the objective. Allison passed out in the back of the Pelican I 'borrowed' from a match. We landed in the hanger where the attackers got the objective out.

After about an hour, we made it to Morcia. Allison began to stir when we landed. She stretched out, totally unaware of where we were then asked "Are we there yet?" "Yes." She jumped when I answered; I dismissed it as either she thought she was dreaming then remembered or the fact that I had said something to her. "Ok, so where is here?" Allison asked after recovering. "A map I designed called Morcia. I should probably explain what's going. We are inside Halo Reach due the fact that we defeated Witch at this game." We exited the Pelican and made our way towards an armory that had weapons I had gathered from my travels. Allison picked out a Sniper Rifle and a Needler for herself while I restocked my DMR ammo.

"So how long have you been here?" Allison asked after picking out her weapons. "One year, eight months. I beat him at a Firefight on Corvette." I answered. She seemed shocked. I motioned her to follow me. I was going to show her my map in case she needed to escape and I was away, or worse. I showed her everything. Hidden teleporter nodes, secret ammo caches, everything. I was tempted to show her a secret I had hidden on Skull Mountain (That Mountain that looks like a skull) months ago, but I decided against it. After the tour was over, I showed her to a makeshift barracks I had made. Luckily, I could use my TacPad to make normally decorative objects appear, so I made a camp stool and a crate appear for her room. "Really, that's where I'm staying?" Allison said ungratefully. "It's either you sleep here, or you sleep in the Pelican." I responded in the same tone of voice.

By the time she settled, it was nighttime. I went to a sniper's nest to look up at the stars. I saw a yellow blip on my tracker get close to me and said "Quite a day wasn't it?"

Allison's POV

I was shocked that he knew I followed him then I remembered the motion trackers that were built into our armor. "The stars here aren't the same, obviously, but they do just fine." said Blade. He pointed towards one of the stars and said "That one has Earth orbiting it. I would give anything to see home again, even if it's that Earth." I didn't know how to respond to that, so I asked him "What's your real name? I asked you earlier but you never answered." Blade shifted uneasily, as if he wasn't comfortable answering. "You are like the last one that was trapped here." That got my attention, despite the fact that he totally ignored my question. "What happened?" I asked. Blade gave the stars one last look before looking at me. He said "Around the same time I got here, there was another person called Collin Holmes."

Third Person POV

Sixteen months ago

Collin was psyched that he was in the game. Two months after he arrived, he decided to take on Lone Wolf. At first, he was doing fine. The Covenant kept coming and he kept killing. Then the gold elites came into play. After he killed three of them, he found two swords with unique coloring, one an ocean blue and the other a deep blood red. Deciding that he needed weapons, Collin grabbed the swords and attacked the elites. The swords cut through them like nothing was there. He kept killing, and killing, like it was nothing. After about an hour, he killed so many elites, his golden armor was stained purple and the ground was soaked with elite blood.

Then the elites stopped coming, and a man in armor so dark, it never reflected any light, came and challenged Collin to a duel. Accepting the challenge, he charged at the man. The man activated his weapon, and jet black energy sword, and charged at Collin.

The battle was fierce. Whatever the two opponents did, the other seemed to know what to do to counter it, like they were the same mind. Then Collin did something nobody saw coming, he dropped his red sword and fell to his knees. Thinking victory was at hand; the dark man walked over to Collin and raised his sword for a final blow. Then out of nowhere, Collin pulled out a Plasma grenade and threw it at the man then armor locked. The grenade exploded and the dark man was thrown back. Curious on whom the man was, Collin walked over to his fallen opponent and removed his helmet, only to see his own face. Collin was never the same after that again.

Allison's POV

Present day

"What happened to Collin? Is he here?" I asked. "No, he just disappeared soon after. He said he was going to find a way home. I never heard from him again." said Blade. I was shocked to learn that there was a third, but this day has been one for shocks. Blade resumed watching the stars, and I left for my room. I was exhausted, and I knew that I had to get some rest for tomorrow.

Blade's POV

I watched the stars until midnight, thinking how Allison will react when she learns the truth. I sighed and went to my room, hoping that tomorrow will be better.

End Transmission

3. Chapter 3

Chapter Four: A Cold Meeting

Allison's POV

I woke up early to prevent another gunshot by my ear. But As I woke up, Blade burst into my room, saw that I was awake and literally dragged me out of bed. "What's going on?" I asked half awake. "I

might have found us a way home." The mention of 'a way home' was enough to wake me up for a week. "What? How?" I asked, but instead of answering me, Blade just kept dragging me until we reached the hanger.

Inside I saw a Saber-class starfighter. "How did that get here?" I asked. My answer was the cockpit of the Saber opening and revealing a man inside. "When you said oh-six-hundred, you weren't kidding. And did you have leave a alarm clock next to me?" said the guy. Then he noticed me. "Oh, is this Miss Alison I presume? My name is John Peters, and I am the one who created the device that WitchDoctor uses to trap players such as you in video games."

My heart skipped a beat. If this guy built the thing that trapped us here, maybe he could get us out! "How does this machine work?" asked Blade. "Very simple, actually. It first scans your molecular structure then transfers that data into the game or computer while adjusting it to meet some standards. Your conscious is then transferred as well. What happens to your body is that it, well, disintegrates." I was blown away. That means the body I'm currently using isn't my real one? Oh well, I'll worry about that later.

"So how do you plan on getting us out?" I asked. "I have no idea. But I do know how to find out," said John. "How?" asked Blade. "I need access to a lab or a super computer to analyze our situation. But where are we going to find those in a shoot 'em up game?" said John. "I have no idea." I stated. I received what I think was a 'Your joking right?' look from Blade, it was hard to tell through his visor. "You're wearing an ODST cheastpiece and you've never been to Halsey's lab?" he exclaimed. "That during the campaign?" I asked. "Yes." "I've never played campaign. I have the Anniversary Edition."

It looked like he understood. "Got it. I know which level Halsey's lab is on and the cheat to get us in without completing the level." I was confused. As if he read my m

ind, Blade said "We can't do anything of our own free will during a cut scene. We lose control of our bodies as they go through the cut scene." "Of course, now can you get us to the level?" asked Phil. "Done. I'll explain everything as we go along, but we have to do the level on legendary for the cheat to work," explained Blade. My heart skipped another beat. "Legendary!" I exclaimed. Blade nodded slowly. I wondered if there was another lab to find.

Blade's POV

After a shuttle ride we hit the level hard. At least, I did. Alison and John were struggling. I didn't blame them. I've been doing this for almost two years. Alison only got here two days ago and John told me that he just hopped into his Saber and hid for three months. I was just lucky to have people to draw fire from me. Things didn't fare better in the tank, so I activated another Easter egg I knew about that gave us banshees. But I was the only one who knew how to fly them so the others went on foot and waited for me to clear the area to finish the mission objectives.

After we made it into the base, things went better for Alison and John as enemies couldn't use vehicles inside a building. I found the extra sword in the base and used that

to clear out some of the cloaked elites. I was killed by two elites I missed, but Alison managed somehow to get one plasma grenade onto the two of them. The gold elite were killed by Noble Team. When we cleared out the base and secured the lab, I told them not to complete the level.

"Alright, here's what we have to do. There's a switch we have to hit that's outside the battlefield," I explained, "The only problem is, it's right above a kill zone. I'll jetpack down and hit the switch. When I do, be prepared to fight off a line of golden elites." Alison nodded while John blacked out. I shook my head in disappointment and pulled him to safety. Alison got into a wraith I 'borrowed' from the Covenant. I grabbed a jet pack and went down to the far end of the map. I put down my weapons and jumped over the fence. This was a tricky maneuver as I had to stay above the kill zone. I hit the ground just as I hit the switch.

I never did get used to respawning. That's why when I did respawn, I gave a quick shudder and made sure my limbs were still responding. They were a little stiff, but I didn't worry. I worried when a golden elite jumped at me. It swung it's sword at me but I managed to dodge and send a solid punch to its gut. It stumbled back a little, gave a war cry then was shot by Alison. When John woke up, he asked "What did I miss?" "Nothing important," I replied, "Follow me." I led them to a back door in the map. A couple seconds after we entered, we found ourselves in a long hallway with empty assault rifles and no armor ability. "What just happened?" asked Alison. "It does this every time we enter the lab. Come on."

As we walked, I was getting more excited. I was this much closer to getting home. Not that I showed it, I kept myself under control to prevent doing something I might regret later. "Amazing! This lab is perfect for my diagnostics!" exclaimed John. I ignored him. I wanted to get a look at the Bungie World Domination plan I saw when I wasn't in the game. "Huh, so that's their plan," I muttered underneath my breath.

"I got it! Blade, Alison, over here!" said John. "What do we have to do to get out?" asked Alison. "Simple, we must go to Installation 04 and use its energy to charge a portal powerful enough to get us out." explained John. "Great! So how do we get to Halo?" asked Alison. "Campaign, in the final level, we have to deliver a package to the Pillar of Autumn. That's our ticket out of here," I said. "Why can't we just fly to Halo with your pelican like when we flew to Sword Base?" asked Alison. "It doesn't have the range to fly us all the way to Halo, so we'll have to hitch a ride."

I was going to hit the switch that allowed us to finish the level when I saw something on my trackers. Confused, I decided to investigate what it was, and wished I hadn't. "You have got to be kidding me." "What is it?" asked Alison. I said "He sent the Meta." "Oh hell." said John and Alison simultaneously. "Yeah, um, he sent that thing to kill me, not you," said John, "But that won't stop him from killing you two." I got the message and said "We have to kill that thing before we move on!" I received a couple of nervous looks. I sighed and pulled out my assault rifle. "I thought you said we didn't have any ammo." said Alison. "I did, but it still makes a great melee weapon on short no-" I was cut off by a punch to the face that sent me into the window behind me.

I heard the window crack and was thankful that it wasn't my ribs. I barely had time to get up before the Meta attacked again. He swung his fist at me but this time I ducked

and sent an uppercut into his chin followed by a stab in his ribs. It didn't do much as Meta swung at me again and again and again. I had an advantage in speed and skill so I dodged his blows easily. But that meant I couldn't strike back as he kept attacking.

I noticed that I was being driven back to the cracked window. An idea formed in my head. When we were at the window, I jumped to the side to avoid his attack. The Meta's fist met the cracked window and the window lost. Alison, who got what I was doing, kicked the Meta out the window. "First I'm zapped into a game, and then I meet an infamous super powered psycho." said Alison, "What's next? I have to jump out of a ship?" I chuckled. "Believe me, it's a lot more of a survival technique than it is just for fun." Alison stared at me in disbelief as I hit the switch and ended the level.

4. Chapter 4

Blade: "Hello everybody who is currently reading this! Welcome to a new chapter (at least until I post the next chapter) of ****Glitch****. Please Read and Review!"

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5. Chapter 5

Chapter Five: Reunion

Blade's POV

After the cut scene ended, we headed back to Morcia. We needed to rest and restock before taking on possibly our last mission of Reach. But when we got back to the map, I noticed two things wrong. One,

Long range motion trackers picked up movement in the base and two, an explosion went off in my hanger. I turned around and headed to Skull Mountain. "Why are we headed to Skull Mountain?" asked Alison. "We might have some unexpected guests. I have a back door in Skull Mountain." "What kind of guests?" "The kind with guns and a grudge."

When we touched down on my secret hanger, I said "Alright, you two wait here while I go check things out." "Wait, I want to come." said Alison. John nodded and said "Me to, we could be helpful." I said "No." "Why not?" "Because this is a stealth mission, I work better alone in this kind of mission." said I. "What if you get caught?" asked John. "Then leave and continue the mission." And with that said, I activated my Active Camo and entered the teleporter node.

After some investigating, I found out that someone was holding a slayer in my base. I decided to grab some stuff we needed for the mission and leave before I became a target.

After about two steps, a bullet whizzed past my head. I instinctively turned around and crouched. A Spartan was standing at the other end of the hall. I recognized the player immediately. It was my brother's Spartan. I knew he knew how to find a cloaked enemy, so when he switch from a DMR to a shotgun, I knew I was in trouble. Thinking quickly, I threw a grenade his way and made a break for it in the other direction. I didn't see if he was killed, I just was relieved I wouldn't be killed by my own brother.

I headed to the armory to grab a hidden armor ability that I made myself. After several kills, I managed to secure the items I came to get. When I got back to the secret cave, I was greeted by an unsavory sight. WitchDoctor pointing a shotgun at my head. "What's up Doc?" I said very annoyed. "Haha. By the way, congratulations on defeating the Meta, not an easy feat." said WitchDoctor. "What do you want you son of a-" "Now now, no need to resort to that kind of language, yet. I have decided to let you live." "What's the catch?" I asked. "You stay in the game for the rest of your life." "Why let us live? I thought you wanted to be the best? And where is my team?" I asked in rapid succession.

"I'll answer your questions in order. I realize that you have spent more time in the game that it will be close to futile to kill you. Technically, I am the best gamer as you are now just a program in a game network. And your team is up there." WitchDoctor pointed upwards. I saw my team hanging over a kill ball. "Insurance?" I asked. "Yes. Now, I suppose that we have come to an agreement?"

Just then, my brother came through the teleporter node with a jet pack and surprises WitchDoctor. Taking advantage of the situation, I grabbed the shotgun and sent a solid punch to Witch's face. He recovered quickly but not quickly enough because my brother was already on top of him with a gravity hammer. WitchDoctor tried to deflect the blow with an energy sword, but as I learned many times, the hammer is faster than the sword in this game. WitchDoctor's corpse hit the opposite wall. "How long have you been here?" asked my brother.

"Soric, it's been at least twenty-two months." I replied. "How did you even get in the game?" asked Soric. "To sum it up, I beat the guy

you just sent across the room at a firefight, he got mad, sucked me into the game, tried to kill me and failed. Multiple times." I explained "Should I be worried? I just killed him." "No, he only gets mad if it's a solo effort. We tagged team on him, so you should be safe." Soric released a sigh of relief. "That's some good news."

"Hate to break up the reunion, but can you stop chatting and get us down?" said Alison. "Oh, right. Soric, I need to borrow your jet pack." "No problem, but why do you keep calling me Soric? Can't you just call me-" I cut him off there saying "WitchDoctor might be listening. The less he knows, the better." "Got it. Now, where's an armor ability I can switch with this?" I pulled the jet pack off of him. "Or you can do that." I jet packed up, used my energy sword to cut the rope and caught my team before they touched the kill ball. "So who's your friend?" asked Alison. "My brother." I answered in a whisper.

6. Chapter 6

Chapter Six: Lost Faith

Alison's POV

"That's your brother?" I asked silently, remembering what Blade had said about WitchDoctor hearing things. Blade nodded quickly before continuing his work of getting us down from above a kill ball. He used his sword to cut the rope and then grabbed us midair and then used his jetpack to get us down. "So this is the team, huh." said Soric. "What? I need your approval for WitchDoctor's victims?" joked Blade. "Did he just tell a joke?" I asked to the side. "I can barely believe either, he seems so serious half the time." replied John.

"So do you have a plan to get out of here or what?" asked Soric. "I wish. I searched The Pillar of Autumn level but all we found was a few extra marines." replied Blade. "Too bad we can't hit that level hard like old times, right?" Blade only replied with "Next time your there, hit those covies hard for me. And try to keep the marines alive, they'll need your help." Soric signed off after that. "Let's go." said Blade. "Where are we going?" I asked. "You'll see." I looked at John but he only shrugged. We boarded the pelican and took off to the unknown location Blade knew about.

It was a long flight. John passed out about an hour ago while sleep eluded me. I decided to have a chat with Blade. "Hey, how's it going?" "Fine. Why are you in here?" asked Blade. "In the game? Or the cockpit?" I asked. "Cockpit." "Well, John passed out and I can't sleep. I want to talk, the silence is killing me." "Believe me, when you live a soldier's life, like I do, you learn to cherish the silence when you have it." "Whatever. So where are we going?" "The Pillar of Autumn. You know that little chat I had earlier with my brother?" "The one where you said that you missed killing aliens with him?" "Yeah, it was code. I was telling him to meet up with us that we'll be disguised as marines." I was amazed. "Will he meet with us?" I asked. "Not unless WitchDoctor brings him in." "And if he does?" "Then he'll pay dearly." Ever since I've been sucked into the game, so many chills went down my back it's almost frozen, but that, I could've sworn we were near an ice cap.

Blade's POV

After my chat with Alison, I focused on flying. But I couldn't help but think. It's been too easy so far. No way would WitchDoctor let us get this far without a bigger fight. I also kept thinking about what I would do when I was out of this living nightmare. I couldn't go back to school after missing two years of it. Not that I liked it much anyway. Then there was Alison. I just felt weird around her. Maybe it's because she's the first real person I've meet in two years. Or maybe it's... no, it can't be that. Alison came in after about an hour.

"Hey Blade?"

"Yeah?"

"Can I ask a weird question?"

"Fire away." "Have you ever feel in love before?" I admit, that was a weird question, particularly one I didn't feel right answering. "Well, not really. Why?" She sighed and said "Well, the night before I was, you know, I had a bad break up." "How bad we talking?" I asked. "Somewhere between 'I never want to see you again' bad and 'nuclear meltdown' bad." Ouch I thought. "I just was playing Halo to drown my emotions." finished Alison. "Well, believe me, it's not easy losing loved ones. How do you think I felt when I figured out that I was probably never gonna get out of here."

"You never did say who you really were. The only clue I have is that you have a brother."

I could only think of one response to that. "I...I'm just a shadow of who I was. I don't like to talk about my past." "What happened to make you this way?" asked Alison, ignoring the hint I dropped. "Lone Wolf." "Huh?" "I played Lone Wolf long ago. I went through exactly what Collin went through. Although, something happened to me that didn't happen to Collin." "What?"

"I was given a second chance." "What do you mean a second chance?" "I mean, Collin died shortly after." A long silence followed my answer. "But I thought you said Collin Holmes was a disspeared."

Eighteen months ago...

That night, I lost the will to go on. I just stood there, for days, waiting for the end to come. I was just about to just kill myself with my own knife when a hand stopped me just as my knife was about to puncture my heart. I looked to see who stopped me from ending my misery. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw Noble Six holding my arm, preventing the knife from killing me.

He pulled the knife away from me and shook his head then said "Why are you doing this soldier?" "I have nothing to live for. My home, my family, they were all taken from me and I'll never see them again." "Not with that attitude. We're soldiers, we fight for what's right, we-" "You're a soldier! You've been training your whole life. I'm not a soldier, I'm a gamer." A long silence followed. "I'm not Noble Six; I'm one WitchDoctor's first victims. Call me Shadow." My jaw dropped. "He used my family as test subjects. My wife, she was killed after

the transit into some game called Runescape by trolls. My daughter, she was murdered by WitchDoctor after he sent her into Pokemon by launching a missile to a cruise ship. I managed to get away from the Flood in the library."

I didn't know how to respond. I was still shocked at the fact that there were others like me. "That day, I've dedicated myself to preventing others from sharing my fate. You're the first in years that slipped by me. But you survived, that proves that you have the skill needed to continue, to end this madness." "I'm not sure. I've always liked Halo, but I never wanted this." "Neither did I, but yet we're both here. I need you to continue this mission."

"Oh how very touching." said a voice with a British accent. We both turned to the source of the voice. "Wyoming." said I and Shadow in unison. "Yes, it is so good to see you again Shadow, and it looks like you have a friend. How about you let me kill you both and get on with my day?" said Wyoming. "You and what army?" said Shadow. Wyoming chuckled. "At the risk of being cliché, me and this army." That's when about fifty marines with about fifty elites surrounded us. "There is no escape for you two. Kill them."

Every marine and elite fired their gun at us. Luckily, Shadow had a bubble shield. "I take it you've been keeping souvenirs?" I asked. "Yeah, I've also been modifying them. Like this bubble shield, it'll go down when I take it down." Obviously angry, Wyoming yelled "Don't just stand there you fools, get them!" Then everyone but Wyoming charged at us. "Well it's a good thing you can handle Lone Wolf on your own." said Shadow.

I activated my energy swords and he pulled out a shotgun. When the marines were at the edge of the shield, we charged. I let my sword swing freely cut down at least five marines at once. Shadow was pulling off a Haloid scene with his shotgun. The marines wisecracked and began attacking from a distance. I had no ammo in my DMR, so I grabbed a Battle

Rifle off of one of the fallen marines. Shadow was playing tag with rockets. Pretty soon, only me, Shadow and Wyoming were left standing.

"It's so hard to find good help these days. If you want something done right, do it yourself." Wyoming charged at us, SMGs blazing. Shadow was out of rockets so I distracted Wyoming while he searched for a gun. Then possibly the worst thing happened, I was hit without shields. It felt like someone hit me with a car. I was hit in the chest and in my left arm. I fell over in pain, grasping my chest. "Well well, that doesn't look too good," said Wyoming, "Here, let me put you out of your misery. Any last words?"

I stood up and said, "Yeah, tell me what it's like in hell!" I lunged at Wyoming, startling him. I managed to knock his SMGs out of his hands. But he still had his martial arts skills, and easily knocked me back down. "You have a strong will, if I didn't have to kill you, I would hire you." said Wyoming. He went over and picked up a shotgun. I prepared for the end. But then Shadow saw this and rushed over and took my shell. "Ah my poor, ill-fated friend. You're only delaying the inevitable." gloated Wyoming. That really hurt. I decided to take out Wyoming. I tried to get up, but he stepped on my chest. "Stay down." he ordered.

"Go to hell." I replied while I took my knife and stabbed him in the leg. He yelled in pain and stumbled back. I took this opportunity to grab a sword and stick it in Wyoming's chest. He was dead before he hit the ground. I rushed over to Shadow and checked on his wounds. They were bad; his entire chest was covered in blood.

"Shadow! Hang in there, I'll see if there's a drop shield nearby." I was panicking. "No, I have nothing left to live for, my family is dead, I've been trapped in this game for ten years, I have no life out there." "No! Don't die! I need help, I can't do this." I felt like I just lost a lifelong friend. "You can, WitchDoctor still thinks you're dead, which means you have the element of surprise. Here," He handed me a AI storage chip. "This chip has everything you need to know. And it also contains the incriminating evidence of WitchDoctor's murders. Find a way out, and avenge my family and... all those who have... been killed... by... him." With that, he died. And I carried on his mission. I became Blade because, in my mind, he's the best there is.

Present Day...

Alison's POV

I couldn't believe what I heard. The man who I thought was an unstoppable hero and trusted with my life, lied to me from the very beginning. "There's a reason I don't dwell on the past. It only gets in my way." said Diamondblade. I said "But why couldn't you tell me, don't you trust us?" "I do, it's just that-" "What? You don't trust us enough?" "It's just that WitchDoctor took everything from me. I have no life in the real world anymore. I'm just a shadow."

I didn't know how to respond. I just left the cockpit. I couldn't believe he would do such a thing. Well, if he wants to pass as Diamondblade, maybe I'll pass as someone else as well. Not Tex, if the Meta was here then Tex might be as well. I thought back to the stories my mom would tell me as a kid about a super hero. Maybe...

Two Hours Later...

We landed nearer to the Autumn's location. Blade walked out of the cockpit and said "Alright, this is it. Let's get going, only bring the essentials. John, I need you to get to the Autumn and insert us into the crew roster. Alison-" I cut him off. "Call me Zephyr."

"Alright, Zephyr, you're coming with me." finished Blade. I nodded silently. I could tell that this was not going to be a good time.

7. Chapter 7

Chapter Seven: The Way War is Fought

Blade's POV

I handed John and Zephyr a special armor ability I came up with. "What's this?" asked John. "It's an armor ability I came up with for

this kind of mission. It can change our look to make us look like simple Marines, fearsome elites or even change our armor." I explained. "I see, so when you said you found extra marines on The Pillar of Autumn, you were referring to us in disguise." deduced John. "Exactly, now let's move out." I said.

Zephyr and I left the pelican and started making our way towards the beginning of the level. We walked in silence, which I could tell made Zephyr uncomfortable. She was used to talking but recent developments made her silent. I couldn't blame her though, but she has to learn that in war, you have to make sacrifices. I saw something on my motion tracker and stopped immediately. I raised my gun and looked around. I saw three elites charge at us, energy swords swinging. I put away my gun and pulled out my own sword. Zephyr saw them too and opened fire with her needler.

The first one died by Zephyr's hand. The second one was quickly killed by my sword and I finished the third one by taking the second one's sword and shoving it into its chest. I hoped that they were just stray AI enemies, but as soon as I saw an emblem that looks like a dream catcher behind a skull and two shotguns, I realized that WitchDoctor had found us. "Damn it! How does he keep finding me?" I asked to no one in particular. Just then, a bullet whizzed past my head. I turned around to see another attack consisting of marines. They were quickly dispatched. I heard a sound that I dreaded. A scorpion tank. I yelled "RETREAT!"

We ran like no tomorrow, which was likely for us at the moment. A tank shell exploded to close for comfort, which made us run even faster. We found some cover and hid behind it. "So what's your ingenious plan Blade?" asked Zephyr. "I have a tendency to make things up as I go along. Don't worry, I'll think of something." Running was pointless, we were lucky so far. "Wait a minute, that tank has the accuracy and AI's are decent shots, so why aren't we dead yet?" "Because I knew you would run, and I have other plans for you."

We turned around to face WitchDoctor with a battalion of marines and covenant, all armed to the teeth. "I see you brought the welcome wagon." I commented. "Still defiant I see. Surrender now and we won't have to hurt you." ordered WitchDoctor. I was about to grab my sword and charge at WitchDoctor when something came up behind me and knocked me out. As my vision blurred, I heard Zephyr ask "What do you want with us?" "I would tell you, but it's more fun for me to see you to find out." said WitchDoctor.

And with that, all I saw was black.

Zephyr's POV

I was ready to provide any support he needed. But I watched helplessly as Blade was knocked out. I turned to see who it was, and was shocked. It was

John. "John, you work for WitchDoctor!?" I asked angrily. "Of coarse. He is the true inventor, I am just his assassin program." John said darkly. "I am going to kill you." I said. "Unlikely, seeing how you will soon be processed." stated John, right before he was shot. "Now I have no more use for you. And this is what happens to those who I have no use for." said WitchDoctor, who shot John. "I-I-I'll s-see

you in h-hell." stuttered John who threw up a drop shield to save himself.

"Hmm, quick thinking. Maybe you can be of some use to me after all. Are you willing to let bygones be bygones?" asked WitchDoctor. "You just shot me, and now your going to offer me my job back? Go jump off a cliff." said John. "Very well, then I'll just wipe your memory and then offer you your job." said WitchDoctor.

WitchDoctor had two guards armed with shotguns lead us to a phantom. I was half expecting him to kill Blade, but he didn't. Instead he had him dragged him to a different phantom. I was beginning to lose hope. There was no way I could fight these guys alone and Blade isn't here with an ingenious escape plan. But he always had a wildcard, unexpected or otherwise. I just hope his card comes to me. When we boarded the phantom, I saw it was empty other than for one pilot. Maybe if we took out the two soldiers, I could 'convince' the pilot to fly me towards Blade's phantom.

"Zephyr, I'm sorry. My primary programming is to survive, and then serve WitchDoctor. But now, I don't know." whispered John. "It's Blade you should be worried about. He might cut you up and throw you off a cliff." I whispered back, "For now, help me take out the guards, then let's 'convince' the pilot to work for us." John nodded.

We were about to make my move when the pilot shot the two guards. "Need a lift?" asked the pilot in a very familiar tone. "Soric? WitchDoctor got to you?" I asked. "Yeah, not cause I beat him, but because I was helping Blade. John turned me in, sent the Meta after me, but I managed to kill him." explained Soric. "How?" asked John. "I hit him with a overcharged plasma shot, which strangely shorted out his time distortion unit again, then I gave him a few shotgun shells to the head, followed by three laser blasts and a mass driver blast." "What's a mass driver?" I asked. "A very, very big gun used in anti-air." I shuddered at the thought of what happened to the Meta. "So how'd you even get here?" I asked.

"Blade's special armor ability came in handy. All I had to do was figure it out." explained Soric. "Great, now how do we save Blade?" Soric laughed, then said "My way. We take out their guns, and then shoot up any hostile inside with the turret." It sounded sane. "What if we're boarded?" I asked. "We give 'em the shotgun to the face contingency plan." said Soric imitating Sarge. I laughed; I was going to like this guy.

We got near Blade's phantom and Soric used the main cannon to get their attention and destroy their cannon. Then he opened the doors so I could shoot any targets with a turret. "Is he there?" asked Soric. "Yeah, awake to, and

already killing stuff." I answered. "Well help him!" "With what? The guards are already dead! Blade! Jump!" Blade saw me and leaped over to our phantom. Soric then destroyed the hostile phantom. Blade then said "Next time if you want to help, get here sooner. John piloting?" "Err, no, Soric is." answered John. "WHAT?!" yelled Blade.

"Blade, I can explain. WitchDoctor created John to gain our trust and help kill us. But in order to make it convincing, he gave John his own memories and subroutines to turn us in." explained Soric.

"Alright, I guess it's not your fault John." said Blade. "By the way, how'd you get past WitchDoctor?" I asked. "I 'borrowed' the armor ability John had." said Soric. "So when did you learn how to fly an alien dropship?" asked Blade. "An hour ago. The neural chip in my head helped." said Soric. "Great, now set a course for my pelican. We'll use her to the Autumn the hard way."

"You got it." replied Soric. I just hoped this would all be over soon. The fighting, the betrayals, all of this. But I also hoped that we all made it out in one piece.

8. Chapter 8

Chapter Seven: Oracle

Blade's POV

After my 'rescue', we went to my pelican and discussed what to do next. "We could still try the original plan." suggested Soric. Then I pointed out that one of us would have to stay behind. "Could we boost the range of the pelican to get us to the Halo ring?" asked John. "If we had the time and parts, yes. But we don't have either." I answered. "What if we hitch a ride on the Autumn when it leaves the atmosphere while it's fleeing the planet?" suggested Zephyr. I thought it over, in theory, it could work. I said "Maybe, if we're far enough from the level to not be affected by the cut scene."

After that, I flew the pelican over to above the Pillar of Autumn level and engaged a makeshift cloaking device. "You installed a cloaking device?" asked Soric, who was co-piloting. "I had a lot of free time." I replied. "So, your sure we'll be able to get out of here?" asked Soric. "Yeah, pretty sure." I answered. "What if we can't?" "Then we're stuck." After that, Soric stayed silent.

We flew to where we predicted the Autumn would be. We waited. After about an hour, Soric was out cold. Zephyr joined me in the cockpit. "Hey Blade, I've been thinking. Why didn't WitchDoctor kill us when he had us?" I've been wondering that to. "I don't know. It's unlike him to let us live." "Maybe we'll ask politely next time we see him." I smiled underneath my helmet.

Hours passed, and John and I were the only ones awake. John was copiloting while I kept a look out for the Autumn. I saw something in the corner of my vision that interested me. But it wasn't the Autumn, instead it was a Covenant mid-ship not joining the fight. Instead, it looked like it was preparing a slipspace jump. I decided to investigate.

I flew towards the carrier and saw something that got my full attention. A Skull and Shotguns emblem. "John, change of plans. WitchDoctor is up to something and I don't like it." I said. "What about the Autumn?" asked John. "We can come back for it. Maybe." I answered. As the carrier entered slipspace, I followed.

I had never gone into slipspace before, so this was a first. It was weird, I saw dimensions moving around the pelican. A lot of different dimensions actually. I saw various games to. Games like Runescape, DC Universe Online, even games I played on AddictingGames. Maybe the

slipspace engine alone could get us back. But WitchDoctor first, theories later. After what seemed like hours, we exited slipspace.

My first thought was move away from the enemy ship. My second reaction came when I saw a Halo. It went something like this: "WHAT THE HELL!?" I couldn't believe it. "John, did you know about this?" I asked. "Hmm? Sorry, I dozed off there for a second. What did I know about?" "An uncharted Halo ring." "WHAT THE F***!" "I'll take that as a no. Forget the Autumn, this is more important." I flew towards the ring and noticed immediately that it was a full desert with mesa's and ancient ruins dotting the landscape. Not what I would've asked for but it's like Sandtrap, just watch out for traps.

Zephyr's POV

When I woke up, I saw that the pelican was in some desert. "Where are we?" I asked. "On an uncharted Halo ring." answered John. "OMG. How?" I asked. "The man we all know and hate." answered Blade. "Ok, so what's the plan?" "We find one of WitchDoctor's bases and locate any possible area WitchDoctor could be. Then we see what he's doing and, if need be, stop him." explained Soric. "Do we even know where one of his bases is?" I asked. "No." I groaned, because I knew this was going to be a long trip.

Three hours later, we finally find an outpost. "So what's the plan?" asked John. "Let's not attract attention so let's use the armor ability I made to sneak in. Soric, you stay here with John. Be ready to pick us up on a moment's notice. Zephyr you're with me." John piloted the pelican as close as he would dare and Blade and I went out the back. We activated our armor abilities and to make us invisible. We walked towards the outpost. We were about halfway there when a sandstorm hit. "Great, like we don't have enough problems." I muttered sarcastically.

We trekked through the sandstorm for about an hour before we found the outpost. We saw a few guards but they didn't see us. Getting inside was easy. Making sure no one saw us was the challenge. We used the armor ability to disguise ourselves as the guards and found that there was a lot of guards inside. I knew that one slip up meant hell, so I stayed silent and Blade do any talking, which was relatively little, as most guards ignored us.

We searched for a computer room. Which was a challenge as this place was full of rooms. After the twentieth room, I was about ready to snap. "Blade, why don't we just ask where the room is?" I whispered to Blade. "We want to not attract attention, so asking is out of the question. But I get why you asked, this is torture." Ten rooms later, I heard a voice that sounded artificial. "Let go of me! This is against all regulations!" I decided to check it out while Blade was investigating the room. I saw three guards, some weird device, and a Monitor!

I decided to introduce myself. I walked in and said "Hi boys! Umm, can you tell me what that is?" One of the guards chuckled; he walked up to me and put his hand on my shoulder. "I can tell you're new, so I'll explain this, if you'll come with me to dinner at my room." The other guards chuckled as well. They walked up to me and I continued to play sweet and ignorant. "So that little ball over there watches over this giant ring, but it won't let us use the ring so we had to

put it in timeout." The man still had his hand on my shoulder, and he was squeezing. "Well, it looks like someone should help it." I said. I then grabbed the man who was squeezing me and slammed him into the guy to my right. The third guy jumped back in surprise. I lunged at him with my knife, stabbing him.

The other two guards got their wits and grabbed my arms, holding me down. I moved my left arm and flung the guy towards the wall. I didn't see that coming. I smiled and looked at the other guy, who looked at me in fear. I punched him in the face. I heard bones crack. I felt a nudge on the back of my helmet. "Now if you don't want your brains full of lead, I recommend you-argh!" I turned around to see that the man had an energy sword through his torso. "I'm in trouble, aren't I?" I asked. Blade, who killed the man, nodded. "Hello, I am 03-636 Ebullient Ancilla, monitor of this installation. Thank you for exterminating those pesky guards."

Blade walked up to the machine holding the monitor. "Listen, we'll help you if you help us." said Blade. "I understand reclamer, I will assist you in whatever matter you need." "Great, now let's get you out of here." As soon as Blade said that, two guards entered. I fired my gun, killing one before he could sound the alarm. But the other guard yelled "Intruder alert! Two unknown-ARGH!" Blade killed him before he could finish the sentence. He turned to me and said "Things just got complicated. I'll call for evac."

The next few minutes was spent running and shooting. We ditched the guard uniforms and took on the form ODSTs. After we fought through the hallways, we became cornered in the hanger. Blade and I fought until we ran out of ammo while Ancilla continued to fight with his eye laser. "How are we getting out of this one?" I asked. "John! We're cornered and out of ammo! What's your ETA?" "About three to five minutes, depending on how this sandstorm goes." "Make it three." He turned to Ancilla and said "How long can you keep

this up?" "I don't know, I only needed to fight like this once. I'll explain later, but for now, keep your heads down."

After John and Soric rescued us, Ancilla spoke up. "Now that we are no longer in immediate danger, I am 03-636 Ebullient Ancilla, monitor of this installation. And you are?" I'm Blade, that's Soric, John and Zephyr. You were going to explain something to us?"

"Ah yes. Before I was captured, I was assisting a rebellion against the reclamer known as WitchDoctor. Their main base was attacked and I was captured in order to aid them gain access to restricted areas."

"Did any of the resistance escape or were taken captive?" asked Soric. "I do not know. Many of the prisoners were executed once captured. But maybe some of the high ranking rebels were taken captive for interrogation and there is a chance that some of the rebels managed to escape quickly or were off site when the attack happened."

Blade spoke up saying "Then we should look for these guys and help them out. John, monitor the comm. channels and look for any chatter on rebel activity. Soric, fly this bird. Zephyr, be ready to enter battle. Ancilla, tell me everything I need to know about these rebels."

I went to do my duty by restocking my ammo and getting a drop shield. I hesitated when I picked up the shield. I realized that I could become anything with Blade's armor ability so I put the shield back. I also realized, when I'm back on Earth, I may still be a SPARTAN-III, instead of little ol' me. With the ability, I could look like me again, with all the strength of a Spartan. I smiled at the thought.

9. Chapter 9

Chapter Nine: The Rebellion

Falcon's POV

Here's my week so far. We lose control of our only operational starship, the Integrity, a few hours later all of our bases were attacked all at once. We lose every single one of them and now the rebellion has nowhere to go. Right now, myself and what's left of my squad are fighting off an ambush from an elite scout force. (I mean the skill level of elite, not the species elites)

We were in a hopeless situation. Our ammo was low and they probably called reinforcements. My theory was proved when three pelicans came into the battle, two in front and one behind us. I prepared myself for the end when the pelican behind us fired missiles at the other two pelicans. Then two ODSs dropped out from behind and ran to our position while the pelican flew to safety. "Why'd it leave us?" I asked. "One of those pelicans was packing a rocket hog. We need to take these guys out before we can evac." answered a trooper. I noted he had a captain's insignia on his uniform.

Just then, five soldiers popped out of nowhere, surrounding us. "Surrender peacefully and you will be taken in unharmed." said one of them. "I don't think so." replied the ODS captain. He then, to my great surprise, pulled out an energy sword and took out two of the soldiers quickly. The other ODS rushed the other three with her DMR and killed them. I was speechless. "Don't just stand there! Fight!" yelled the ODS. I complied.

One fight later, me, my team and the ODSs were flying away one the pelican where we found a third ODS with a shotgun in hand. "Thanks for getting us out of there. I'm Falcon, leader of Alpha squadron. That's Black Op., our intel guy, and that's Derby, our vehicle expert. You are?" The ODS with the shotgun stood up and said "I'm Soric Guras, that's Zephyr, our pilot is John and the boss is Blade." When he said Blade, my heart skipped a beat. "Did you say Bade?" asked Black Op. Soric nodded.

The three ODSs' armor suddenly changed to show three mark V Spartan armors. My jaw dropped. I heard rumors about this guy, how he's the only one to survive a one-on-one with WitchDoctor, how he beat Lone Wolf and how he killed Wyoming. "How did you do that? With the armor?" asked Black Op. "I'll explain later, right now I need to know what you know." replied Blade.

WitchDoctor's POV

Everything was proceeding nicely. Blade was still on Reach, even if

he did escape my clutches, the rebellion has been crushed and my master plan is almost ready to set into motion. "Sir!" I turned from my view of the ring to one of my captains. "What is so important that you have to tell me?" The officer was hesitant to reply. "The monitor has escaped with the help of two unknown enemies."

"So?" I really wasn't worried about that tin can. "Also, we've lost contact with the 53rd Scout Force while they were assaulting a small group of rebels." "Must have been a tough group of rebels." The rebels weren't a threat to me anymore, so I wasn't worried about that either. "That's what I thought to, until I found out the Covenant Mid-Ship Night of Retribution picked up some unusual readings as it entered and exited

slipspace. It was similar to a cloaking device." I gave the captain a hard look. "A cloaking device?" "Yes sir. The outpost that was attacked also mentioned having a pelican drop ship evacuating the two unknown enemies. And after analyzing footage of Spartan Diamondblade385 in action, I have confirmed that both his pelican and the unidentified pelican have the exact same markings."

Now I was worried. "Are you saying you suspect Blade is on this ring?" "Yes sir." "Alert every soldier under my command to be on the lookout for any unidentified hostile and shoot it on sight!" "I already have the command on stand-by." The captain exited and I looked back at the ring. Blade is the single most dangerous threat to my entire operation. And if he was here on this ring, then I had to mobilize everything I had, accelerate my plans and warn my associates about him. Not because he is some hero with mystical powers, but because he will do anything to end me.

10. Chapter 10

Chapter Ten: Cold Storage

WitchDoctor's POV

I was nervous. That was something that didn't happen too often. Partly because Blade was loose on the Halo ring, but mainly because I was delivering bad news to the council. They didn't respond to well to bad news. I've seen three council members killed because they brought bad news. I was beginning to have second thoughts, another thing that didn't happen too often, but it was too late. They were here. Well, in holographic form anyway.

There were originally ten members in the council, but now there were only five left, including me. "What is so important that you must call a council meeting WitchDoctor?" asked the one who is only known as Nightmare. "Blade is on the ring, we must accelerate our plans if we are to-" I was cut off by a man called Dusk. "So what? You have an army at your command! Use it to squash him like you did with that pesky rebellion."

Dusk would've said more, but Nightmare motioned him to be silent. "Dusk, WitchDoctor is a master of strategy. If he says that we must accelerate our plans, then we do so. Eon has left us and we lost one of our greatest in that war on Earth, not to mention Project MECH was a complete failure. WitchDoctor, for our plans to succeed we need Blade dead. This meeting is adjourned." when Nightmare finished, I

asked a single question. But most of the council left as soon as Nightmare ended the meeting. Only Dusk remain. "Dusk, is there something on your mind?"

"Yes, why do you fear this man so much?" he asked. I honestly didn't know myself. "I wish I knew." was the only thing I could say. "Maybe it is because Blade is a man with very little to lose. You took everything from him and he still fights. Very little is more dangerous than a man with nothing left to lose." said Dusk.

It made sense. I decided to ask him my question. "Dusk, what if Blade should succeed in his mission to kill me once and for all?" He sighed, and said "Then give him what he deserves." Dusk signed off after that, leaving me to wonder what he meant.

Zephyr's POV

For once, it was silent. I never knew how much I could miss it until now. Blade left me in charge of the Pelican until he and the others secured a warehouse used by the rebellion. It gave me some time to think.

I wasn't sure about anything anymore. I was stuck in a game, on an unknown Halo ring that had a rebellion that was recently defeated, a weird monitor who kept teleporting in and out all the time to make progress reports on the ring's functions and a fleet made up of UNSC and Covenant warships. My life could not get weirder.

I tried to focus on the task at hand, but I kept thinking about what I would do if I got out of here, about how my parents would react to me coming home, about Blade. I always went back to thinking about Blade.

I couldn't figure out why I kept thinking about him. He lied to me, but he did save me on multiple occasions. He seemed nice, but I didn't know what he was like before, or why he kept keeping secrets to himself when he could trust me.

I sighed and ripped off my helmet in frustration. I didn't know if I should still feel angry at him or if I should forgive him. I caught a look at my reflection in my visor. I looked into my eyes and realized something had changed about them. I saw a killer's look in them, one that showed little mercy in them. This scared me as I dropped my helmet and stumbled back.

It was like the story my mother told me about Zephyr, who was a gentle being until she became a monster when she was enraged. I realized that was why Blade kept his past a secret. Because he was no longer whoever he was before this all happened. I knew that I had to leave this game, before I was no longer Allison, but Zephyr.

It was the last thing I wanted to happen to me.

03-636 Ebullient Ancilla's POV

Simply unacceptable! WitchDoctor's forces have repurposed the sentinel production facility to build weapons and ammo! The sooner they were gone the better. I looked over the other functions of the ring that were infected by WitchDoctor's forces. Over ninety-eight percent of the ring's functions were disabled, destroyed or

repurposed. I hoped that the Flood containment facility wasn't breached.

After a quick look, I saw that it was being burnt by primitive flame throwers. Primitive, but effective, as only a handful of spores managed to infect the personnel, but were quickly burnt to a crisp in the process. I must give credit where it is due. Although these humans were a primitive race, their weaponry and tactics proved to be more effective in containing the Flood than the Forerunners. I turned my attention to other matters.

I saw yet another violation of protocol. An AI construct in the ring's systems. Simply inexcusable! I would have to terminate it immediately. Unless it was the rebellion's construct, then maybe it would aid Blade in his quest to terminate WitchDoctor. I decided to see for myself.

"What are you doing here construct?" I asked it. "I'm hiding, I can't let them find me." answered the construct. Curious, it did not sound like the rebellion's construct nor did it sound hostile or deranged. "Hiding from whom?" I asked. "The Eclipse." Even more curious.

"Who are the Eclipse?" I asked. "They are the destroyers of life, conquerors of all they see. They want everything." This made little sense to me, but I could tell that the construct was clearly traumatized. "I'm sorry, but you cannot stay here. However, I know some friendly recla-" I caught myself there. Blade did not like to be called reclaimer. "Friendly humans who will help you."

"T-thank you. Do they fight the Eclipse?" I was puzzled by this construct's personality. It was almost like a child. "I'm not sure they even know the Eclipse even exists." "I will go then. If they come get me." replied the construct. "I will make sure they do."

11. Chapter 11

Chapter Eleven: Vague

Blade's POV

I cursed inwardly as another bullet flew over my head. I fired my battle rifle at the nearest soldier. "Blade! Two at ten o'clock!" yelled Falcon. I tossed a plasma grenade that way. Out of the initial engagement of around twenty, only three remained. "Soric! Rocket! Turret!" I yelled. Soric pulled out his rocket launcher and fired at turret killing the two in the vicinity. "We got a runner." stated Derby. "I got this." said Zephyr, who pulled out her sniper rifle and fired. The runner dropped. The team regrouped at my position. "That's the eighth ambush this week! How the hell does WitchDoctor do it?" said Falcon.

I shook my head in frustration. WitchDoctor somehow has been able to track our location in the last week. He's smart, but he must be psychic to keep finding us. "I don't know, I don't care right now. Falcon, where is this secret weapon our intel suggests?" He shrugged. "It ain't here. If it was, we'd be in a hell of a lot more trouble." reported Falcon.

"Alright, everyone back to the pelican. We'll regroup and check out another outpost." Everyone nodded and began to move out when Ancilla teleported in. "Ancilla, report." I said automatically. "I found something that you need to see Blade." replied Ancilla. "Falcon, you're in charge until I get back. Ancilla, let's go." Ancilla teleported us as the others left.

I found myself in the ring control room. "Alright Ancilla, what's so important?" I asked. "I found a construct in the ring's systems. It's scared and won't come out unless it can trust you." explained Ancilla. "I thought all unauthorized AI units weren't allowed in the ring systems." I stated. "Um, well, you see..." I laughed, "Alright, let's take a look." I said as I walked up to the console. As I did, a hologram appeared from the console. It took the form of a woman wearing torn clothing. I wondered why all the AI holograms I've seen are women. "Do you fight the Eclipse?" she asked. I nodded. She pointed at Ancilla and said "Please leave us." When he looked at me for approval, I gave him a slight nod.

When he left, the AI turned her attention to me. She said "They call me Vague, but I don't know if that's my name or a description." "Maybe you're both. Most of the people I know don't use their actual names. Take me for example, I'm called Blade." "Why is that?" she asked. "Personal reasons." I answered. She thought about it for a moment before saying "'Blades of glory and blades of hope, which will succeed?' Which are you?" I shrugged in response saying "I don't fight for glory, but I'm not sure I'm the man to be called a symbol of hope. I'm just a man."

"Then what do you fight for? Freedom in power? Power in freedom? Or the chance to regain some hopes lost in your past?" No wonder she's called Vague. She never seems to give a blunt question. But then again, it's only been a few minutes. "I just want all this to end." She gave me a blank stare before saying "I will go with you. Then I will see if you are a blade of hope or a blade of glory."

I have no idea what she wants out of me, but I didn't question her. I have a feeling that her answers are even more perplexing than her questions. I found

where she was plugged in and yanked her. I then inserted her into my helmet. I instantly regretted it as I felt a splitting headache. I fell to my knees clutching my head in agony. "What are you doing?!" I yelled.

I blacked out before I got an answer.

Soric's POV

We were getting worried. Blade left about twelve hours ago and didn't even check in. The only thing stopping me from grabbing a vehicle and searching for Blade myself was the fact that Blade was probably just out of contact range or was infiltrating an enemy base. "Hey Falcon, any idea on what's taking Blade so long?" I asked. Falcon shook his head. It was our turn on sentry duty and we often argued during this time. But we were silent as we waited for Blade. The cave we landed in was hard to spot but would easily be blocked off if attacked. So if he was captured, interrogation might find something useful. Provided that Blade didn't break the interrogator first.

Out of nowhere, Ancilla appeared, as well as Blade, who was on the ground. I rushed to check on him. Weird, he seemed fine. No blood, no battle damage, even his weapons hasn't been used. "What happened?" asked Falcon. "I'm not quite sure myself. I left Blade alone with a construct that was inside this installation's systems. I meant to check on him sooner than I did, but I was sidetracked by a major violation of safety procedure." explained Ancilla.

"JOHN!" I yelled. He came running like the devil was after him. When he saw Blade, he began spitting out incomplete sentences. "What happ-... Son of a-... Ancilla?" Ancilla explained what happened to him. "Check his AI storage unit." he instructed. I obliged and saw it was active. "We got something in there. Should I rip it out?" I asked.

"NO! If you do, Blade will be lost to us. The AI in there is called Vague. She was created a number of years back. She has the processing power of Cortana and the ability to jump from person to person such as the AI known as Alpha or its fragment Omega. She was designed as a means of locating the resistance and destroying it from within."

I'm grateful that John explained everything to us quickly but one thing was still nagging me. "Then why is Blade like this?" I asked. "Either his willpower is strong enough to keep Vague at bay or more likely, Vague is testing Blade." John answered.

"Testing?"

"Yes. Vague became sympathetic to the resistance's cause but got away before she could be destroyed. I always assumed you guys had her. Apparently not. As for Blade, he is being tested to see if he can be trusted."

Again, I was grateful for John keeping things simple and to the point. "How long will he be out?" asked Falcon. John shrugged. "Hard to say. He will wake up at some point, but not anytime within the next day or so. Until then, Blade put you in charge."

I didn't need to see Falcon's face to know he was deeply troubled about being in charge for extended amounts of time. One of the few things we could agree on was that he was better at making 'in the now' decisions than at long-term

planning. This made him a natural pilot and squadron leader, not so much a tactician.

"Alright. We'll just keep searching for WitchDoctor's secret weapon until we either own it ourselves or smash it to little pieces." All I could do was nod and wonder how long Falcon could be in charge without cracking.

12. Chapter 12

Chapter Twelve: War is simple...

Zephyr's POV

I was deeply angered. Angry at WitchDoctor for trapping me in this game, angry at Blade for withholding the full truth and angry at

myself for not being able to do anything about it. All I could do was follow Falcon's orders as he was in charge until Blade was conscious. At the moment, we were flying to where we suspected WitchDoctor's secret weapon was, which is a HUGE space station. It was roughly the size of Hawaii.

I wonder what would happen if it attacked us. Falcon was a good pilot but I doubt he would be able to dodge a massive wall of missiles, bullets and lasers. Not that we had to worry about any of that, since we were posing as a normal cargo ship en route to the station. The ship we were using was really a disguised rebel ship, but since John knew the right codes, we didn't have to worry about having to be assigned to anything as he made us look like a fresh crew to replace an old one. Blade was kept hidden in a secret compartment along with a message to get him up to speed if he awakes in the middle of a mission.

So our plan was to enter the base, find the weapon, sabotage weapon systems and grab what we can get and destroy what as much as we can't take with us. But first, we had to prep for the smash and grab. I had to pose as a guard to find the main security office to find and shut down any and all security protocols that could potentially harm us. I was anxious because this was my first mission without Blade for backup. The others didn't seem as fazed as I was, but it was hard to tell with the armor on.

I studied the station carefully as we flew closer to it and noticed something odd. Parts of the station were blown open in some parts. "Hey Falcon, do you notice anything strange about the station?" "Aside from the new holes, yes. I'm not getting any transmis- hold up. I'm picking up a distress signal. Putting it on screen."

A man that looked like a doctor from RVB appeared on screen saying "This is Facility Omega broadcasting a level zero alert to any ship within range. We have been overrun by Flood and zombies. I don't know how they got out, but they are fighting both us and each other. We won't be able to hold out for long. Please get us out of here!" The screen froze then repeated.

We just stared, trying to absorb the fact that two different apocalypses were happening on the station.

After what seemed like eternity, Falcon said "Zephyr, get yourself and the others prepped for an assault. We'll get whoever's left off of that station." I ran to alert the others of what was about to happen, then got prepped myself to hold off an apocalypse.

Blade's POV

I was exhausted. Worst part was, I was still sleeping. Vague trapped us in my mind and is constantly testing me. Worst part was, I couldn't rest, not unless I wanted to get caught in one of her traps again. Vague appeared next to me. "Very good. You're the only one to have been able to get this far. You have proven that you are a blade, but you have yet to prove what kind of blade you are. You may rest now." I was suddenly suspicious. "What's the catch?" I asked.

She smiled and said "Even the strongest weapons need to be sharpened. So please, rest."

"Why all this?"

"To see what kind of-"

"I know that, but why not just look into my memories to find that out?"

"People change. Memories that are pure can be tainted. I prefer to see what kind of person you are, not the person you were."

I didn't know what she was saying, but I didn't give it any more thought as I fell asleep.

13. Chapter 13

Chapter 13: ...simple can be Complex

Zephyr's POV

"Tank form on your left Soric!" He jumped forward as soon as I warned him. The flood would've bashed his skull in if he hadn't jumped out of the way. Black Op. and I focused our fire on the mutant zombie and it fell within seconds.

We finished off that wave soon after the tank fell. "That had to be the fifth wave in the past hour! When are they going to run out of bodies?" I asked to no one in particular. We'd been breaking up the fallen flood bodies every time we finished a wave, but they just seemed to have an endless supply of bodies to use. "Might I remind you that this station is WitchDoctor's largest production facility? There could've be thousands of personnel on this station when the outbreak occurred." stated John. Everyone groaned at the fact as we moved forward.

After the tenth or twelfth wave of Flood, we were low on everything but complaints. The only one who seemed to be enjoying himself was Soric. When I asked him, he said was "I'm just imagining the look on WitchDoctor's face when he hears that we not only hit this place, but also done so during a Flood outbreak and succeeding. He'll be so shocked he could probably power his ship for a month." I admit, I would like to see that happen. After what seemed like the fortieth wave (we stopped counting after wave twenty), We finally managed to get to where the survivors were. They barricaded themselves in something that looked like a elephant mobile command center, only a lot bigger and with wheels.

Falcon was the one who knocked on the door. A slightly panicked voice from inside asked "Who's there?" Falcon chuckled slightly before answering, "The only people dumb enough to respond to your distress call. My name is Falcon, Blade's second in command."

The door opened and we rushed inside. We were greeted by about twenty humans and ten elites pointing their guns pointed at us. When they saw that we weren't Flood, they lowered their weapons. An ODS that looked like he came from Halo 2 came up to us. "Thank God you came. I didn't think anyone could be so stupid, be we're happy to see anyone. I'm Lieutenant Harrison. Is Blade here?"

I was the one to answer, "No, he's currently dealing is a private

matter. The details are vague, but he should be back, we just don't know when." It was like a smack to the face to most of the survivors. "Oh, I see. Well, what's the plan? We don't have the ammo to survive a charge to the hanger and unless one of you knows how to drive a mammoth, we can't go anywhere." That's when we all looked at Derby. When he noticed that we was in the spotlight, he raised his hands in defense and said "Hey, don't look at me, I'm only good at anything up to Reach."

About an hour of tossing ideas in the air only to be shot down followed. I lost interest watching Harrison and Falcon arguing on the best course of action and began to chat with some of Harrison's troops. They were a little cautious at first but eventually they saw that I was a human and they opened up little by little. "Can I ask you a question?" a soldier named Private Samuels asked. "Go ahead." "Why do you guys fight? I mean, we were all told the official story that you are defectors trying to activate the Halo ring, but honestly, most of us don't believe anyone outside the Covenant could be that stupid once they know the facts."

"Well, most of us were taken from our homes back on Earth. We were given armor, weapons and augmentations and forced to fight. Blade managed to pull me out before WitchDoctor killed me." That shocked everyone. "You were taken?" another soldier asked. "Yeah. For playing a video game." I could tell that learning that I was taken rattled them, but as they asked more questions, they began to understand more why the rebels fight.

Soric's POV

"Have I mentioned I don't like this plan?" Zephyr asked for the sixth time. I wasn't wild about it either, but after three hours of arguing, the two brilliant leaders finally came up with something that might work. "Enough times that it's getting on my nerves. Look, all you have to do is nail any flood that get to close to us. Simple, right?" said Falcon. It suddenly dropped several degrees as Zephyr looked at Falcon. Apparently, he felt it too and did the smartest thing any man would've done, move to another section of the mammoth.

The plan itself was simple. Anyone with mechanical experience would be fixing the mammoth while everyone else held off the apparently endless waves of flood with limited ammo for an unknown amount of time. The only people who hated the plan the least were the ones who didn't have to fight, but that was a low bar.

We all agreed we would start during the middle of the delta shift. That was in six hours. Six hours listening for the sounds of flood attacks, putting up with complaints from the others and Zephyr's claustrophobia. You could just feel the enthusiasm in the air.

Two hours later, nerves were tense. It was mostly because of the flood outside, but I could tell some of it was because of our presence. They didn't seem thrilled about the fact that they had to work with the people they thought of the enemy. Their interactions with Zeph seemed to ease it, at least towards her. I caught one staring at me before he looked at something else when he realized he was caught. I could tell he was waiting for us to turn on them.

Half an hour later, Zephyr was showing signs of going stir crazy. She

was constantly fidgeting and messing with her sniper rifle, usually just by taking it apart to clean it then putting it back together again. Black Op. was sitting perfectly still, either poised to react to anything that might happen, or he was asleep. It's hard to tell sometimes. With nothing else to do, I decided to fall asleep, hoping to get at least an hour of shut eye.

WitchDoctor's POV

"Return fire! Pattern alpha alpha seven." commanded Captain Hon of the Revolution, the ship I was escaping on. Two frigates, the Peace and War and the Thunder-strike, caught up to us and hit us with point defense cannons. Revolution opened fire as soon as the two got to either side of us. The Peace and War lost her starboard cannons while the Thunder-Strike rolled to our starboard and dived beneath us, taking only minimal damage. The Peace retreated while Thunder continued to attack. "Turn one hundred eighty degrees and accelerate to maximum until you see the Thunder play copy cat then brake at maximum. I want a firing solution ten seconds ago."

The Revolution turned around and began to change her velocity. As soon as the Thunder saw this, she did the same, but only faster so she caught up to us quickly. Revolution quickly stopped as the Thunder roared ahead. "Fire missile pods!" Three missile pods launched from the Revolution and the dozens of missiles that came out of the pods destroyed the engines of the Thunder. "She's broadcasting a surrender." announced the comm officer, "Peace and War is retreating out of the system at eighty nine percent of maximum velocity. We must have hit her engines." "Good. Get over to the Thunder and have our troops board her for anything we could use. If the crew wants to come with us tell them we don't have any room."

I left the bridge and returned to my quarters. That was the second engagement this week. So far any mention of Blade is speck of dust at best. He was my best bet at survival. I often wondered how I would approach him, as he hated me. So far, none of the ideas I came up with were good. The best case scenario was that he take me prisoner and use me for information. Worst case, he cuts my heart out and shoves it down my throat. If only I knew more about how he thought. He remained an enigma at best, often displaying patterns of thought that seemed out of synch. Even when I had John spy on him, he remained a mystery.

Although, I'll make that leap when I get there. For now I had to focus on finding the elusive man. Even the rebel traitor has yet to report. He knew how to disappear, that much was apparent when he escaped our first encounter. It took me a year to track him down on Reach, and I only had a few days at best before the next engagement. Without any other ideas, I checked the intelligence reports that came in from the Thunder-Strike. One report caught my eye. An old freighter that was suspected to be under rebel control docked with production facility Evergreen. If Blade were on that station...

"Captain Hon, set a course for Evergreen station! And prepare the troops with anti-flood gear." He was startled but recovered. "Why do we want to go there?" he asked. "Because I suspect Blade is there. And if he's there, we may be able to recover Project Four before the flood crack it open."

14. Chapter 14

Sorry about the delayed updates. I promise I still am working on _Glitch_ but I'm having a hard time trying to come up with the actual text. So don't remove this story from your alerts or favorites. â€¦ if you don't have it on alerts or favorites please put it on one or the other.

Blade's POV

I jolted up in a cold sweat. I took a moment to look at my surroundings before acting. I was in some sort of medical office, on a bed hooked up to some sort of monitor. My helmet was still on so I concluded it was using my neural chip to monitor me.

"Testing, one two one two." I jumped at the sound of Vague's voice on my internal speakers. Normally that wouldn't have bothered me but it also sounded like it was coming from inside my head. "Well I am connected with your neural chip, and I was designed to have Freelancer AI fragment's abilities to inhabit the human mind through the chip." I hated it when she pointed that out. "Whatever, just don't make a habit of it. Access my-" "Already done. We're on a rebel freighter that is docked with Eclipse production facility Evergreen."

"What? Why?" A second passed before she answered. "Questions without answers at hand have answers elsewhere." "Meaning your clueless. Great." My tracker picked up motion outside the room. It was moving fast and my tracker said it wasn't friendly. I grabbed the pistol I was left with and took cover behind the bed I was on. The door burst open and three bodies came in. I fired six shots, two for each body. They didn't fall. When I finally got a good look at them, I was horrified. Flood have boarded the ship. I reloaded and fired at the infection bugs in their chests as they fired at me with human weapons.

I grabbed the nearest guns and paused as I heard gunfire. "Vague, give me a waypoint to where that fight is." I followed the path Vague gave me, fighting Flood all the way to what appeared to be the bridge. There, automated defenses and Ancilla were battling the Flood, and appeared to be doing a decent job despite the number of Flood. "Reclai- er, Blade! You're awake!" exclaimed Ancilla after I helped finish off the Flood near the bridge. "Not now, we need to destroy this ship. Where is everyone?"

"They left to respond to a distress signal sent by some Eclipse reclaimers." They left to help some enemy soldiers out? Well, on a station filled with Flood... "Where's _my_ pelican?" "They left it on the surface of the instillation for fear of-" "Good. Now, blow this ship up before the Flood get a chance to use it, then you're coming with me. Vague, set a waypoint to where the SOS came from. Ancilla have any sentinels you have meet up with me, I'll need some extra guns on my side." I left the ship after I gave the orders, following the waypoint Vague set, praying that someone was still alive.

Zephyr's POV

You know that brilliant plan we came up with? Turns out that the

Flood planned for that by bringing in some of their creatures that can fly. Soric mentioned that they were from Halo Wars, but I was more concerned about flying zombies. We lost five of the Eclipse humans and two elites, but we kept fighting strong. The only good thing about the mammoth at this point was the fact that it had rocket turrets.

I stopped using my sniper and found that Needlers make great anti-air. We probably would've fixed up the mammoth but then we began to run out of ammo. Anyone who didn't have any ammo ran inside, only to find some infected forms waiting inside. "We cant' hold this position!" yelled Falcon as we tossed his battle rifle to the side and began using one of the new weapons I found earlier. One of the elites began to say "We need to-" before a HUGE explosion had everyone stop and look to where it was coming from. Even the Flood seemed puzzled as to what caused it.

What came out of the fire and death was a green ghost, launching rockets instead of plasma, accompanied by a dozen Sentinels. It was damaged but not dangerously so. The next thing I knew, the ghost rammed every Flood near me and nearly blew up Soric's side with rockets.

But the thing that left me most speechless was the fact that it was Blade driving the ghost. "Alright everyone! Here's the plan: Zephyr Black, you're with me, Soric take this ghost and the Sentinels and ram through enemy lines and keep that depot secure, Falcon gather who's left and follow us in three minutes. We're going to punch to the nearest ammo depot, restock, find a ship and get the hell off this deathtrap." As we set out to do out what Blade told us to do, part of me couldn't help but wonder how long he was awake, and if that AI was still in his head.

I followed Blade in a non-stop charge through four lines of Flood already weakened by Soric's own charge. I could hear the our third wave finishing off the Flood behind us. When we hit the depot, Soric was doing tricks with his shotgun that would put Halioid to shame. When Falcon's group showed up, we managed to clear the Flood out of the area.

"Alright everyone, here's what we're going to do," Everyone not watching for Flood began to listen to Blade, "My team will act as scouts for a new ship. Our ship was destroyed by a core overload when Flood began to over take it." One of the marines spoke up "There's a ship yard five decks down with a _Paris_-class heavy frigate. It's nearly complete but the engines and navigational systems are online." "The Ship yards are in a vacuum and zero-g to aid in construction!" another marine exclaimed. "But we need class three clearance at the least to launch it under regular circumstances. Now we need something like class zero. That's why it's still there."

"That's why I have a very skilled AI with me to crack any codes that get in our way." Everyone hushed when Blade made his statement. "We'll follow a similar three wave attack. Except this time we'll charge to a nearby vehicle depot to grab some transport. This is what we need: armed warthogs and ghosts for the front, followed by Specters and hogs with supplies and troops then by Scorpion tanks." Everyone acknowledged his orders and began to restock.

I walked up to Blade after I restocked. "So... you're out of that

coma." I said casually, unsure on what to talk about. He nodded and said "Just in time too. Flood were about to break into sickbay." I simply nodded in reply. I didn't know what to say. I admit I have mixed feelings about Vague being here, but I guess it was Blade's call.

"Zephyr, I need you to lead a strike team to the vehicle depot. Take Soric and Derby with you." "Yes sir." I said in response. "And Zeph?" I paused and looked at him. "It's good to see you." I smiled under my helmet. He may be an idiot at times, but at least he cared.

15. A note from the Author

Hey everyone, Blade Starshot here with some news.

I'm rewriting Glitch.

Don't worry, I'm not throwing out the old plot, I'm just giving it some new content. No one is allowed to continue this version of Glitch. The name of the rewritten Glitch will be Halo: Glitch.
_Check it out if you want, but no one's forcing you.

End
file.